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first part of his discourse, he points out the defective organization and imperfect action of the Society whom he addresses. This duty he performs with freedom, but in no harsh spirit. To illustrate his views, he introduces, with great propriety, descriptions of similar associations in other cities. In this part of his discourse, he states a variety of interesting facts as to the condition, intelligence, and opportunities of acquiring knowledge, enjoyed by the mechanics in Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere. Mr. Homer then considers the subject of combinations and *strikes* among journeymen, and points out their true character and disastrous consequences. His remarks upon this topic have an especial value, coming as they do from a man who has a full and practical acquaintance with the course of affairs among the mechanics.

The whole discourse is animated with an excellent moral feeling. Mr. Homer inculcates habits of order, sobriety, and self-respect, among mechanics, in a most emphatic manner. The address has much in it to interest a wider circle of readers, than that for whose particular instruction it was prepared.

14.—*De la Réforme des Prisons, ou De la Théorie de l'Emprisonnement, de ses Principes, de ses Moyens, et de ses Conditions pratiques.* Par M. CHARLES LUCAS, Inspecteur-général des Prisons du Royaume, Membre de l'Institut, &c. &c. Tome premier. Paris. 1836. 8vo. pp. 385.

WE know it is very wrong to indulge ourselves in prejudices of any sort, whether in favor of theories or against them, in favor of practical men or of speculative writers. Both are important and useful in their place. But we confess we find it difficult to conquer a certain feeling of disgust and repugnance, when we see a plain practical subject overlaid and smothered under a mass of refined distinctions, formal divisions, technical phraseology, and scientific parade. There are some authors who seem to be aware that the value of their works depends on the number and power of their original ideas, or new combinations of facts and opinions, while there are others who appear to think nothing can have intellectual weight, unless it has the same quality physically, and that the number of reams of paper over which they can spread their elaborated ideas is quite as important as the number of ideas themselves. M. Charles Lucas, unfortunately for us, belongs to the latter class; and we have been

compelled to turn over a great many useless pages, and to read a great many idle words, in order to present to our readers the brief meaning of the long harangue ; "der langen Rede kurzer Sinn."

The main object of the work is to show, that a very different treatment is due to the different classes of persons, who, from various causes, are so unfortunate as to fall under the punishment of imprisonment ; and that the juvenile offender, the debtor, the accused, the convicted of high crimes, and of less serious offences, the male and the female, should be subjected to very different discipline, according to the nature and aggravation of their offence, and the susceptibility of their characters. Now this is so strikingly true, and at the present day beginning to be so generally admitted, that we do not perceive the necessity of attempting to convince thinking men of it, by entering on the subject in a first volume of 385 pages, besides an introduction of 103, to be followed by, we know not how many, of equal dimensions. What is the utility of the division of imprisonment into three kinds ; the *preventive*, to prevent escape and mutual corruption, the *repressive*, to prevent recommitments, and the *penitentiary*, to prevent the continuance of criminal habits and intentions ?

All imprisonment of the guilty is, or ought to be, preventive and correctional. The only justifiable object of it is the prevention of crime ; and the only question that need be raised on the whole matter, from beginning to end, regards solely the adaptation of the means to this proposed result, in relation to the different characters that are to be subjected to the punishment. Is this a question to be settled by theories ? Is this a subject which requires volumes to discuss ? Certainly it is important to have definite and comprehensive views on this as on other topics ; but experience, founded on continued and diversified experiments and researches, can alone determine the true value of particular means, and the relative success which attends different plans. Various schemes of imprisonment have been tried, both in this country and elsewhere, within a few years, and what we esteem most important in relation to the subject, at the present moment, is an accurate investigation of the results of these different practices. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to develope all their consequences, and therefore such inquiries cannot be so entirely satisfactory and conclusive as we trust they will become a few years hence. Still much may now be determined with certainty, which is of very great value towards forming a perfect scheme of imprisonment ; and as new suggestions are continually made, we feel confident that the path of improvement, on which we have entered, will be followed to the end.

There is one evil connected with our system in this country, which is mentioned by M. Lucas, and for which we will now venture to suggest a remedy. He says, with truth, that the number of re-committals cannot be accurately ascertained here, because the liberated convict wanders from one State to another, and is never recognised, unless returned to the same penitentiary. It would not be difficult, we think, to detect these migrating rogues, if a regular periodical correspondence were maintained by the directors of each penitentiary with all the others in the Union, containing the names and personal description of all their inmates. The importance of the results of such communications would more than repay the labor of making them.

Another object of the work of M. Lucas, besides the development of a grand theory of imprisonment, and one which he seems to consider of no slight importance, as he has given a considerable part of the Introduction and occasional hints throughout the volume to its assertion, is to disabuse the European public of the absurd notion, which seems to have prevailed to some extent in England, France, and Germany, that we are making valuable progress in this country in prison discipline, and that we have begun some establishments of the kind which might be profitably imitated in Europe. According to M. Lucas, there is no such thing as penitentiary discipline in this country. Nay, not merely so, but there never will, and never can be any such thing. He describes the American system as one,—but let him speak for himself;

“Un système qui arrivait à deux grands résultats, sans doute, à empêcher la *corruption mutuelle* des détenus, et à produire *l'intimidation*; mais un système purement *repressif*, dépourvu de toute éducation pénitentiaire. Nous irons plus loin; non seulement nous dirons à ces auteurs [Messrs. de Beaumont et de Tocqueville] que le système pénitentiaire n'est pas encore né aux États-Unis; mais que ce n'est pas même sur le sol américain qu'il peut et doit naître.”—*Introduction*, pp. lviii., lix.

And a little further on he says;—

“Une fois parvenu à empêcher la corruption mutuelle des détenus et à produire l'intimidation, il est, sinon dans les calculs positifs, du moins dans les instincts secrets de la civilisation américaine, de ne pas aller au-delà. Il ne faut donc pas chercher un système pénitentiaire dans les résultats de la réforme américaine; il ne faut pas même l'attendre de ses essais, ni de ses efforts.”—p. lxi.

This is so liberal, so enlightened and complimentary an assertion, that we scarcely know how to reply. We would not

venture to intimate that M. le directeur des prisons du royaume could have any feeling of jealousy at the comparisons made between some American prisons, and the "maisons centrales," or the "bagnes" of France under his superintendence ; and we confess our inability rationally to account for so unfortunate an ignorance of our system and character as is shown by the above sentences ; — an ignorance so pertinacious that not even the perusal of the work of De Beaumont and De Tocqueville could remove it. Lest, however, so eminent a person should be again betrayed into such an unhappy mistake, we will in mere charity inform him, that in all prisons in this country, conducted on the plan of the Auburn reform, religious, moral, and intellectual instruction forms an essential part of the system ; that in all treatises and essays on the subject, with which we are acquainted, long or short, such instruction is invariably spoken of as indispensable in the *theory of imprisonment* ; (See Reports of Boston Prison Discipline Society, *passim* ; article *Prison Discipline* in Lieber's "Encyclopedia Americana," and an article in "The Christian Examiner," July, 1836;) that the Reports of the directors of prisons generally speak of its importance and its good effects, and that some of them actually go into details of the reforms of character permanently produced by this, and by other means of *penitentiary discipline*. That we have not reduced our theory more completely to practice may perhaps be accounted for, by persons charitably disposed, from the fact that scarcely twelve years have elapsed, since the first attempt to introduce that reform which is now most approved ; that great efforts are necessary to remove misapprehension, prejudice, and ignorance in the legislatures of the different States, by whose authority all alterations must be made ; (prejudice and ignorance, by the way, which M. Lucas, with his experience and knowledge of the subject can scarcely be expected to appreciate or participate in,) and by the difficulty of finding suitable agents for carrying into effect new and untried plans. Notwithstanding all obstacles, however, the theory has been carried into practice in nine States of this Union, in the District of Columbia, and in Upper Canada, without counting Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which have adopted a different system, but one in the *theory* of which religious and other instruction is equally regarded as essential. What does M. Lucas require more ? Are twelve years so long a period as to enable everybody to obtain the necessary information on this subject, and to spread the reform through the whole system of imprisonment in every corner of this wide land ? Let us see what he will have effected, with his central power and ample means, in the course

of twelve years, and then we shall be better able to judge of the quality of that civilization, which he describes in the following glowing terms of self-inspired enthusiasm.

“La civilisation évidemment prédestinée à doter notre siècle du système pénitentiaire, c'est la civilisation européenne, civilisation large et généreuse qui ne saurait s'arrêter à la limite de l'intimidation ; l'élan de ses sympathies, l'urgence de ses besoins, lui commandent de la franchir, et de s'occuper au plus vite de réaliser en fait cette correction des condamnés, dont elle a déjà inscrit le nom et reconnu l'obligation dans ses codes.” — pp. lxi., lxii.

In answer to the reproach of incompleteness in our reforms here, we think it may be useful to state the condition of the city of Boston and county of Suffolk, (nearly though not quite identical,) as to their prisons and modes of criminal discipline. The greater offenders are sent with those of other counties to the State Prison ; those convicted of lesser offences, to the House of Correction ; the accused, and the few debtors who, under the recent law, are still so unhappy as to be confined, are placed in the County Jail ; while juvenile delinquents are taken care of, and properly educated in the House of Reformation. All these are on the most improved system, as we think, combining religious, moral, and intellectual instruction in due proportion with the labor and restraint required, — with the exception of the County Jail. We understand, however, that the city government have it in contemplation soon to remove this new and strong building, with the purpose of replacing it with one more conformable to the improved state of our knowledge in the construction of such edifices. When this is done, the system will be tolerably complete, and will be carried out in such manner, as will not be disgraceful to the city, the county, or the commonwealth.

In connexion with these establishments, we cannot but refer, with just pride, to that admirable private institution for the public benefit, the Farm School, which comes powerfully in aid of the other disciplinary resources of this community, and which is and will be, we doubt not, an incalculable blessing to many a sorrowing parent, and many a reckless child. The instincts of American civilization go farther than M. Lucas has imagined.
